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THE NEW YORK MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN GEOGRAPHERS

The thirteenth annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers was held in New York, December 28-30, 1916, in connection with the sixty-ninth meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In spite of the attraction of the larger meeting, the interest in the geographical papers was so great that the majority of the members remained in attendance throughout the sessions of the smaller body.

Some thirty papers were read. As the titles and abstracts will ultimately appear in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* only a brief general discussion will be given here.

There were several papers belonging to the domain of mathematical geography and more especially of cartography. Mr. William Bowie of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey described the operations of that bureau to determine the intensity of gravity throughout the United States. Since 1909 the network of stations has been greatly increased, namely from 47 to 260. Professor J. Paul Goode presented a suggestion to diminish the marginal distortion prevalent in Mollweide's Projection by interrupting its elliptical shape and projecting each continent on a new central meridian. Mr. Godfrey L. Cabot of the Aéro Club of New England, who spoke on invitation, called attention to the need of maps for aviators in this country and outlined what had been done in this field abroad. He referred to the final selection by experts in Europe of the scale of 1:200,000, or about three miles to the inch, as the best suited to aeronautical purposes. On invitation, Professor Boris P. Weinberg of the Technological Institute of Tomsk, Siberia, spoke on the method of centers. He based his remarks on a paper he had recently published in the *Izvestiya of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society* (Vol. 51, 1915). After alluding to the well-known use of the method by the Bureau of the Census for the determination of centers of area and population, he exhibited a map showing his own determinations of the movement of the center of population and area of the Russian Empire from 1613 to 1913 and compared them with Mendeleyeff's earlier calculations of a similar nature.

Some ten papers were devoted to physiography. A notable feature of this part of the program was a group of papers dealing with the extinct lakes of the Great Basin region. Each of the five speakers (Messrs. E. E. Free, J. C. Merriam, Ellsworth Huntington, D. T. MacDougal, and J. C. Jones) presented a distinct line of evidence bearing upon the origin and age of various lake phenomena in the Southwest. Because of various pieces of evidence, among which are the salt deposits, practically all of which are within 150 feet of the surface, Mr. Free's conclusions agree with those of Professor Jones, that the lakes fully occupied their respective basins in recent times and became extinct within historic times. Doctor Huntington likewise concludes that there have been marked variations of climate during the past few thousand years. He believes that the rise and fall of the water can be correlated with the more rapid and less rapid growth of the big trees as shown by their rings of growth. On the other hand Professor Merriam can not accept the paleontologic evidences of the extreme modernity of the strand lines. The facts on which the discussion was based will be published in a group of five papers to appear in an early number of the *Review*.

Professor R. S. Holway of the University of California read a paper on the marine terraces of California. The illustrations were striking. The evidence of warping of relatively recent upraised marine benches along anticlinal and synclinal lines was especially noteworthy. Professor George D. Hubbard of Oberlin College gave a brief description of the moraines, eskers, and kames found in 1916 in the southern Green

Mountains near Wilmington, Vermont, which seem to point to the existence of local glaciation after the withdrawal of the continental glacier. Dr. R. F. Griggs of Ohio State University described his recent visit to the scene of the great eruption in 1912 of Mt. Katmai at the base of the Alaska Peninsula. The volcano blew its head off in the great explosion, leaving a caldera three miles long and nearly half a mile deep. On the Bering Sea side of the range a great transverse valley was found where for miles the ground is full of fissures from which steam issues in thousands of jets.

Three papers dealt with the physical geography of foreign areas. Professor Emmanuel de Martonne of the Sorbonne, visiting French professor at Columbia University, read a paper on the physiography of the Carpathian Mountains, conceived to extend from the Danube at Vienna to the Danube at the Iron Gates, i. e. including the section generally known as the Transylvanian Alps. The salient points of his paper are contained in an article which will be published in a forthcoming number of the *Review*. Professor W. H. Hobbs of the University of Michigan discussed sand blast erosion and deflation in the shaping of the oases of the Libyan Desert. He called attention to the fact, also referred to by Professor Jefferson in his article on Utah in the May, 1916, number of the *Review* (pp. 347-349), that many oases are great flat-floored and steep-rimmed depressions in the desert and not merely spots where water occurs and vegetation flourishes. He also pointed out the necessity for bearing in mind the mechanism of erosion in arid regions in any general scheme of erosional processes, as we tend to be unduly influenced by the evidence of erosion in humid regions, with which we are more familiar. Tahiti and its coral reefs were the subject of a paper by Professor W. M. Davis of Harvard University. The spurs of the two volcanoes which form the island are truncated in maturely aligned sea cliffs. The island is surrounded by a barrier reef. The sea cliffs must have been cut under conditions which prevented the formation of reefs, and since then new conditions must have been introduced as a result of which the growth of reefs has been possible. The cause of the change from the condition of cliff cutting to those of reef growth is found in a moderate submergence of the island.

Three papers dealt with aspects of American climatology. Professor R. DeC. Ward of Harvard University discussed the rainfall types of the United States. Fourteen types were distinguished, and each was illustrated by a composite curve of the monthly rainfall amounts. A map showed the areal distribution of these types. Professor A. J. Henry of the U. S. Weather Bureau spoke on the flood-producing rains of 1916 in the United States. The torrential rains in southern California, in Arkansas, Missouri, and the lower Ohio valley were described, as well as the two tropical storms which visited the East Gulf and South Atlantic States in July. Dr. C. F. Brooks of Yale University dealt with the snowfall of New England. The amount of snowfall in any given section is dependent on its exposure to the snow-bearing winds, northeast from the Atlantic for the greater part of the region and westerly from the Great Lakes in the northern part. The highlands are the snowiest because they are cold, moist, and windy; the intermontane valleys have less snowfall because of the higher temperature, smaller precipitation, and less exposure. In the coastal region, since the other conditions are favorable, the snowfall depends on the temperatures. The two last-named papers will appear in forthcoming numbers of the *Review*.

Plant geography was represented by three papers. Messrs. H. L. Shantz and Raphael Zon of the Forest Service submitted in manuscript their new map of the vegetation of the United States. This map will form a plate in the atlas of American agriculture in preparation by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The authors discussed the principle of classification used, Mr. Shantz having compiled the non-forested and Mr. Zon the forested areas. In another paper, Dr. R. M. Harper discussed the past, present, and future of the forests of the eastern United States. In the last two hundred years the forest area east of the Great Plains, originally occupying seven-eighths of that territory, has been reduced about 40 per cent and the total stand of timber about 60 per cent.

The predictions of the early exhaustion of the forests, the author said, had nearly always turned out to be exaggerated. The influences tending to preserve the trees seem at present to be nearly equal to the destructive influences. A paper on plant succession after glacial recession mainly in Glacier Bay, southeastern Alaska, was read by Mr. W. S. Cooper. Glacier Bay is especially favorable for such study because of the rapid recession which has taken place there during the last century and a quarter, a movement which has been accurately determined several times during recent years.

In the domain of human geography, one of the most interesting features of the program was a symposium on the geography of the war conducted by Professor D. W. Johnson of Columbia University on the evening of December 29. Professor Johnson himself contributed an introduction to the subject. He was followed by a number of speakers who discussed various aspects of the war on land, on water, and in the air, as follows: S. W. Cushing, The Plains of Northern France; Lawrence Martin, Rivers and Marshes of the Eastern Front; Ellsworth Huntington, The Danube Valley and the Balkan Complex; Emmanuel de Martonne, The Carpathian Mountains and Transylvanian Alps; J. Paul Goode, Geographic Aspects of the War on Water; R. DeC. Ward, Geographic Aspects of the War in the Air; J. Russell Smith, Economic Geography of the War. The papers all brought out the fact, referred to in his introduction by Professor Johnson, that, in spite of the remarkable development in means of transportation and the general machinery of war, geographical conditions still have a dominant influence in warfare.

General anthropogeography was represented by a paper by Professor R. H. Whitbeck of the University of Wisconsin on the influence of geographic environment on primitive religions. He pointed out how the environment of each was reflected in the mythology and religious beliefs of the Norseman, the Mohammedan, the American Indian, and the ancient Egyptian, and alluded to the gradual making-over of the mythology of the early Aryan invaders of India after they had come under the influence of the monsoon climate, so different from that of their arid Bactrian home. The decreasing influence of environment as the scale of civilization rises was also referred to, and to this circumstance was ascribed in part the absence of a marked geographic influence in the mythology of Greece and Rome, and in part to the absence of a dominant geographic fact such as the Nile in Egypt, the desert in Arabia, or the monsoon in India. A local example of the influence of nature on man in India was afforded by Mr. S. W. Cushing's paper on Sriharikota, a long narrow sandy island off the Coromandel Coast north of Madras, and its primitive inhabitants, the Yānādis.

American topics in anthropogeography were variously represented. Professor Mark Jefferson in his presidential address pointed out how the distribution of cities reflected the broader economic divisions of the United States. He displayed a striking map showing, by different symbols, the location and size of all cities from 1,000 inhabitants up. Similar maps were exhibited for the British Isles and India. These two afforded a graphic contrast between an industrial and an agricultural population. A related topic was treated by Mr. Lawrence V. Roth of Harvard University in a paper on geographic and historic factors in the growth of the more important American cities. The movement of population towards the larger cities in the United States falls into four periods, each introducing a new geographic area. The first period begins with our Colonial history, and the development of cities takes place along the Atlantic coastal plain; during the second era, beginning about 1810, city growth is most notable in the Mississippi valley along the river fronts; beginning about 1850 a third era opens, and the cities of the Great Lakes district have a notable growth; during the fourth period, opening about 1900, a relatively sudden movement of population is found on the Pacific coast. Professor Collier Cobb of the University of North Carolina read an interesting paper on colonial transportation in North Carolina, pointing out how in many cases the roads of the time have become the present routes of the trunk-line railroads.

In the field of commercial geography, Mr. A. E. Parkins of the Peabody College for Teachers at Nashville, Tenn., discussed the development of manufactures at Detroit. An interesting point brought out was that the present characteristic industry of the city, the manufacture of automobiles, cannot be ascribed to geographic influence. It is rather due to the inertia of an industry whose origin there was more or less arbitrary. Examples of this kind are worth noting as a warning against laying undue stress on the potency of geographic influence, especially as regards economic phenomena, which are often purely man-made. Mr. W. G. Reed of the U. S. Department of Agriculture spoke on "Plimsoll's Mark," the load-line painted on the vessels of the leading sea-faring nations. The various positions prescribed for placing this mark according to the different oceans and the different seasons reflect the recognition of climatic influences in this domain of commerce.

The meetings were held in the rooms of the Department of Geology at Columbia University. Some forty members of the Association attended, and the general attendance of members and non-members was between forty and eighty. In another building an exhibit of recent maps, particularly of the European war, had been arranged by Columbia University and the American Geographical Society. A relief model, with no vertical exaggeration, of the Mt. Washington Range in the White Mountains was also exhibited by Professor J. W. Goldthwait of Dartmouth College, on which the cirques he has called attention to in recent papers were clearly discernible. At a business meeting Professor W. M. Davis introduced the suggestion that the Association appoint a committee to co-operate with the National Research Council, and after consideration the Council recommended the following two resolutions, which were adopted at the business meeting of December 30, 1916:

Resolved: That the Association of American Geographers endorse the plan of the National Research Council presented to the Association by Professor Davis and promise co-operation.

Resolved: That the Council be authorized to designate representatives from among the members of the Association of American Geographers as members of a co-operating Committee.

The Council thereupon authorized the retiring president, the president-elect, and the secretary-elect (Messrs. Jefferson, Ward, and Dodge) to appoint from among the members of the Association a committee to co-operate with the National Research Council.

Luncheon, served in the geological laboratory, and dinner, provided at a long-table at the headquarters hotel of the Association, afforded opportunities for social intercourse. The meeting closed with the reading and adoption by unanimous vote of a resolution of thanks for the hospitality extended to the Association by Columbia University.